

The Quest 241

Chapter 241: Encounter with Danger

Yu Chengwu escorted the two black-robed cultivators to Elder Yu, locking them in a secluded room for interrogation, hoping to extract some useful information.

Mo Hua, curious, followed along to watch the excitement.

While Yu Chengwu interrogated inside, Mo Hua sat outside with Elder Yu, drinking tea.

Before long, the screams from inside ceased, and Yu Chengwu emerged, with some bloodstains on him, but they were not his. His expression was contemplative.

Mo Hua's eyes lit up, "Did you find out anything?"

Yu Chengwu glanced at Mo Hua, reluctant to answer.

Elder Yu said calmly, "Speak."

Yu Chengwu pondered for a moment and then said, "Those two confessed they are criminal cultivators."

"Criminal cultivators?" Mo Hua was slightly stunned.

Elder Yu explained, "It refers to cultivators who have violated the laws of the Dao Court and committed serious crimes, now wanted by the Dao Court officials."

"What crimes did they commit?" Mo Hua asked curiously.

Yu Chengwu shook his head, "They didn't say. Judging by their reticence, the crimes are likely significant. Even if they spoke, it would mean death for them. I didn't press further since we aren't Dao Court officials. It's not our jurisdiction."

Elder Yu asked, "Anything else?"

"Yes," Yu Chengwu nodded, "According to them, their group consists of over twenty people, mostly criminal cultivators wanted by the Dao Court, banding together out of desperation to rob and kill for spirit stones."

Elder Yu snorted coldly, "A bunch of beasts."

Mo Hua asked, "What should we do then?"

Elder Yu said, "First, send these two scoundrels to the Dao Court. If they're indeed wanted, we can claim some reward. After that..."

Elder Yu put down his tea cup, thought for a moment, and said, "After that, we'll wait and see what the Dao Court does. Capturing criminal cultivators is their job. If they don't act, we shouldn't interfere lightly."

"However, if you encounter them in the mountains, don't hesitate. Capture them if possible and claim the reward. If not, kill them and feed the demon beasts in the ravine."

"A bunch of scoundrels, a waste of spirit stones even while alive!"

Elder Yu cursed again.

Yu Chengwu nodded but still frowned, "I suspect those two didn't tell the truth."

Elder Yu raised an eyebrow, "What do you mean?"

"These kinds of cultivators are seasoned in the cultivation world, their words habitually half-true. If they say twenty, it might be more. If they say they rob and kill, their motives might not be that simple."

Elder Yu nodded, "Spread the word. Hunters entering the mountains should be more cautious and act accordingly."

"Yes," Yu Chengwu cupped his hands.

Elder Yu also advised Mo Hua, "You need to be extra careful. If there's no urgent matter, don't go deep into the mountains. If you must go, stay vigilant."

"Don't worry," Mo Hua nodded.

He still needed to enter the inner mountains but had to be more cautious.

Otherwise, with the speed he used spirit ink for drawing arrays, his stock would soon deplete.

High-quality spirit ink of late first grade was too expensive to buy with spirit stones.

Though Mo Hua wasn't short of spirit stones now, it was only relative to the Qi Refining stage. For Foundation Building, he would need a lot more, so he needed to start saving.

Afterward, the hunters entering the mountains were more careful.

Whenever there were hunters in the mountains, Yu Chengyi or Mo Shan would patrol nearby with the Sima Compass.

If a fight broke out, they would respond promptly if there was danger.

Thus, seven or eight days passed uneventfully.

Though they encountered some suspicious cultivators, these only watched from afar and then quietly retreated.

One day, Mo Hua, as usual, drained the blood of several demon beasts and sat by a stream to wash his hands.

After washing, Mo Hua looked up and saw a dense fog rolling in, obscuring vision beyond a hundred feet.

Mo Hua's heart tightened, sensing trouble.

He released his spiritual sense, detecting faint blue spiritual energy mixed with thick miasma and heavy fog within the mist.

These mixed elements blurred and obstructed his spiritual sense.

Mo Hua remembered Mo Shan's advice.

If encountering dense fog, do not move recklessly. Otherwise, getting lost in the deep mountains could be fatal.

However, staying put was also risky.

Mo Hua took out his brush and ink, drew several arrays nearby, covered them with soil and rocks to hide their traces, then sat in the center, patiently waiting for the fog to dissipate.

After half an hour, the fog suddenly cleared.

The inner mountain fog came quickly and left quickly.

Mo Hua packed his things, ready to leave, when he saw a bloodied cultivator running towards him from afar.

Seeing Mo Hua, the bloodied cultivator was shocked and urgently shouted, "Run!"

Mo Hua recognized the bloodied cultivator as Ji Li!

Ji Li, pale and wounded, weakly stumbled a few steps before a black-robed man caught up and slashed his back.

Blood gushed out as Ji Li collapsed, still looking at Mo Hua, muttering, "Run..."

The black-robed man glanced disdainfully at Ji Li, then at Mo Hua, and said hoarsely, "Do you know him?"

Mo Hua nodded.

The man sneered, "Good, then you can accompany him in death."

He then strode towards Mo Hua.

After a few steps, he frowned and looked down to see Ji Li's bloody hand gripping his trouser leg, preventing him from approaching Mo Hua.

Ji Li tried to speak but could only cough up blood.

The man sneered, broke Ji Li's hand, and continued towards Mo Hua.

Mo Hua stood motionless, staring blankly.

"Scared stiff?"

The man sneered internally.

It was understandable. Such a young kid, facing death, being scared was normal.

The man, with a cruel look, continued walking.

As he was about to step within ten feet of Mo Hua, a doubt crossed his mind:

How did this kid survive in the inner mountains?

The inner mountains were full of demon beasts, miasma, dense fog, poisonous swamps, and criminal cultivators.

This kid should have died long ago.

The man was puzzled but continued stepping forward, feeling something crush underfoot, a crisp, fine sound, like a spirit stone, with a sense of spiritual energy flowing.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the stones glowing faintly red.

The man looked up to see Mo Hua calmly retreating, his expression no longer dazed, but calm, with a hint of amusement in his clear eyes.

The man was first confused, then suddenly realized, "Not good!"